

Bill permanently repeals credit hour, state authorization regulations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Richard Hanna today voted to protect higher education from federal government overreach by permanently repealing two regulations.

The legislation, H.R. 2117 – Protecting Academic Freedom in Higher Education Act - prevents federal intrusion in academic affairs, protects student choice in higher education, and reduces the regulatory burden on colleges and universities. Hanna co-sponsored the legislation.

"Upstate New York is a worldwide higher education destination. The 24th Congressional District is home to about 20 colleges and universities, which is one of the highest concentrations of higher learning in the nation," Hanna said. "These schools are assets to our communities and local economies. Higher education means direct jobs and collaborative partnerships with private industry.

"Our college presidents have told me that this bill will help Upstate universities and students continue to thrive. I am pleased to support the Protecting Academic Freedom in Higher Education Act."

This bill permanently repeals two regulations released by the Department of Education in late 2010 – the credit hour and state authorization regulations. These regulations put the federal government in the middle of issues that have historically been the responsibility of academic institutions or states. They could also have significant implications on college costs and student choice.

The credit hour regulation establishes a federal definition of a credit hour. This attempt to measure student learning at the federal level will limit flexibility, and obstruct innovative teaching methods that could help students save money by graduating early.

The state authorization regulation forces states to follow federal requirements when deciding

whether to grant a college or university permission to operate within the state. This one-size-fits-all requirement piles unnecessary costs on states, colleges, and students, and could pave the way for future overreach into higher education.

The bill passed by a vote of 303-114.

Organizations supporting the bill include:

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Association of University Professors

American Council on Education

Association of American Universities

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities